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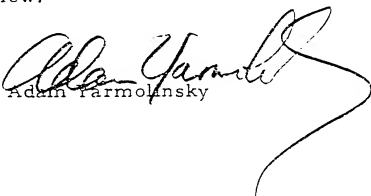
12 February 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR The Secretaries of the Military Departments
The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Comptroller)
The Assistant Secretary of Defense
(International Security Affairs)
The General Counsel
The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
(Legislative Affairs)

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Operations During
the Cuban Crisis

Reference is made to the 7 January letters from the Chief Counsel of the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee to the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of the Air Force, and to my 10 January memorandum, subject, "Secretary of Defense Presentation on Cuba Before the Congress."

Attached for your information is a copy of the statement on Department of Defense Operations during the Cuban Crisis submitted to the Chief Counsel of the Senate Preparedness Investigating Subcommittee in response to the 7 January letters. The statement reflects the substance of the comments submitted by the addressees of this memorandum in response to my 10 January memorandum, circulating a draft statement for review.


Adam Yarmolinsky

Attachment

When attachment is removed,
this memorandum becomes
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SecDef Control #1046

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REMOVAL OF CLASSIFIED ATTACHMENTS
BY SIF NARS, DATE 4/27/79

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Department of Defense Operations During the Cuban Crisis

This statement will review the operational roles played by various agencies of the Department of Defense, beginning with the Navy's role and the actual preparations for and functioning of the quarantine and then describing the missions carried out by other Services and agencies.

The Quarantine

On October 1, Secretary McNamara met with the Joint Chiefs to discuss intensified Cuban contingency planning. One of the decisions made then was to alert Admiral Dennison, Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Fleet, to be prepared to institute a blockade of Cuba.

On October 3, Admiral Dennison took the initial steps to prepare his forces, and directed his subordinate commands to prepare for the formation of a blockade force.

To mask widespread preparations for the actions proposed, Admiral Dennison suggested that we announce that our forces were preparing for an exercise. PHIBRIGLEX 62, a large-scale amphibious assault exercise, previously scheduled for the period October 15-20, provided a cover for our Caribbean preparations. Atlantic Fleet forces were already moving toward a high peak of readiness because of a heavy schedule of training operations which were under way, but further specific orders for highest state of readiness were issued October 6.

On the 8th, an F4H squadron was deployed to Naval Air Station, Key West, to reinforce air defenses further. The squadron augmented the detachment of F8U-2Ns which had been assigned to the station on September 19.

On the 17th, the Joint Chiefs of Staff notified General Gerhart, Commander of the Continental Air Defense Command, to take action without delay for the augmentation of air defenses of the southeast U.S., and Admiral Dennison alerted shore-based Navy and Marine Corps fighter squadrons in the area to assist Continental Air Defense forces. Admiral Anderson sent a personal message to the Fleet Commanders advising them to be prepared to order as many ships as possible to sea on a 24-hour notice.

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BY SKF NARS, DATE 4/27/79

On October 18, Admiral Dennison was designated Commander, Blockade Force.

On October 19, it was decided that Admiral Anderson, Chief of Naval Operations, acting for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, should prepare a plan for the limited blockade of Cuba, based on previous contingency planning.

On October 20, Secretary McNamara directed Admiral Anderson to prepare the position and policy papers, scenario, and implementing instructions for the limited blockade. Admiral Anderson's responsibility also included the defense of Guantanamo Naval Base and protection of U.S. shipping. Admiral Anderson's scenario was followed closely in implementing the quarantine.

Admiral Dennison notified the base commander at Guantanamo to be prepared to evacuate all noncombatants Saturday night or at any time in the next two days.

On Sunday, October 21, it was positively decided that our first objective would be to block further shipments of offensive military equipment to Cuba, and that our aim was also to see that offensive weapons were removed from Cuba.

Procedures and rules of the quarantine were drawn up during that Sunday, in time for Secretary McNamara to approve them that night. The general philosophy behind these procedures was to achieve our objective with the minimum degree of force required and to assure, so far as possible, that control of the situation would remain in the hands of fully responsible officials in Washington and Moscow. We did not want any loss of lives merely because our instructions were ambiguous and therefore misunderstood, or because some Russian merchant marine officer did something hot-headed, but not irrevocable.

On Monday, October 22, the Joint Chiefs of Staff sent out detailed plans for conducting the quarantine. The order listed prohibited items, general rules of engagement, details for conducting searches, concept of the operations and plan for the defense of Guantanamo.

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Admiral Dennison continued deployment and positioning of his ships and other forces to enforce the quarantine.

Reinforcement of Guantanamo and evacuation of dependents and other noncombatants was virtually completed by the time the President went on the air.

In his speech, the President had used the term "quarantine" instead of "blockade," because the latter term could have been interpreted as an act of war. The proposed interdiction was aimed solely at offensive weapons, and every effort was to be made not to have other nations consider the action as a warlike act.

Tuesday, October 23, at 7:30 p.m., half an hour after the President signed the Proclamation ordering the interdiction of offensive weapons moving into Cuba, Secretary McNamara announced that he had taken the necessary steps to deploy our forces to be in a position to make effective the quarantine at 10:00 a.m. the following morning.

The next day, Wednesday, October 24, Admiral Dennison established the surface quarantine line on an arc 500 miles from Cape Maysi, manned by destroyers, backed by surface patrol units, an anti-submarine warfare/surveillance unit, and a logistic support unit.

Subsequently, the quarantine zone was established, bounded by two circles, each with a 500-mile radius; the center of one circle was Havana, the other, Cape Maysi. It was an area within which quarantine ships would interdict vessels en route to Cuba carrying offensive weapons.

In signifying intent to stop a ship, destroyers were to use all available communications, including international code signals, flag hoists, blinking lights, radio, loud speakers, etc. A Russian linguist would be used. If the ship did not stop, warning shots were to be fired across the bow. If this failed, minimum force was authorized to damage nonvital parts of the ship but to refrain if possible from personnel injury or loss of life.

Once the ship was stopped, a party, including a Russian linguist, was to board. Visit and search were to include examination of the manifest and inspection of the cargo. In the event the visit was refused, the ship was to be taken into custody and forcefully boarded to control the ship's operation.

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If the boarding met with organized resistance, the ship was to be destroyed. If the ship submitted to custody, the boarding party was to consist of a temporary master, control and engineering personnel, and an armed guard detail. Coast Guard officers, who were expert in search-and-visit procedures, were embarked in Admiral Dennison's flagship.

Once in custody, the seized ship would be escorted by one or more destroyers and sailed to Charleston, San Juan, Roosevelt Roads, or Fort Lauderdale.

Early Wednesday morning, it began to appear that those Soviet ships en route to Cuba which were capable of carrying questionable cargoes had either slowed down or had altered or reversed their courses. Later information confirmed that the ships had reversed course and returned to Soviet ports. Only one Soviet ship, a tanker, continued.

At 5:00 a.m. Thursday, October 25, the carrier ESSEX and the destroyer GEARING established contact with this ship, the BUCHAREST, and intercepted her at 7:15 a.m. GEARING sent a flashing light challenge. The Soviet tanker replied, "My name is BUCHAREST, Russian ship from the Black Sea, bound for Cuba." BUCHAREST dipped her colors. GEARING returned the salute. Since there was no reason to suspect she carried contraband, BUCHAREST was cleared for continued passage to port.

On Friday, October 26, a boarding party from the PIERCE and KENNEDY (destroyers) went aboard the Lebanese ship MARUCLA, for inspection, since it was under charter to the Soviets and was capable of carrying prohibited material. No prohibited material was found, and the MARUCLA was permitted to proceed.

Significant developments involved the sightings of submarines which were forced to the surface because of our intense surveillance. Three long-range, "F" class, conventional submarines were identified in the quarantine area. Another submarine, a "Z" class, long-range conventional submarine, was photographed in mid-Atlantic near the Soviet auxiliary TEREK on October 22. The extent of these Soviet submarine operations was significant in that plans for their deployment must have been made well in advance; the submarines would have had to deploy not later than the first week of October.

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At 7:45 p.m. on Friday, a new submarine was spotted within the quarantine zone to the northeast of the Dominican Republic. It was positively identified, and surveillance was intensified.

Meanwhile, a clearance system (CLEARCERT) had been established for ships moving through the quarantine zone. Embassies and consulates were to issue the clearance certificates in accordance with instructions and on forms provided by the State Department. Foreign vessels departing U.S. ports would receive the certificates from the collector of customs. Clearances would be granted to vessels transiting the quarantine zone but not destined for Cuba, and Cuba-bound ships with cargo which did not contain prohibited material. It was recognized that it might be necessary to stop and search a ship which had been previously cleared.

On Sunday, October 28, came the Russian domestic news report that Khrushchev had ordered the missile sites in Cuba dismantled and returned to Russia, but we continued quarantine operations. Soviet merchant vessels approaching the quarantine zone went dead in the water upon reaching the 500-mile line.

On the 30th, the President agreed to suspend aerial surveillance and active quarantine operations pending the outcome of UN attempts to secure inspection guarantees and a show of Soviet good faith. (Aerial surveillance and active quarantine operations resumed November 1, when U Thant returned to New York from Havana without having secured inspection guarantees.)

On October 30, the destroyer CECIL forced a Soviet submarine to the surface after 35 hours of continuous contact. When the submarine surfaced, it was on course 090 as prescribed by our instructions to Moscow of October 24.

During the period Friday through Wednesday, November 2-7, the naval quarantine was characterized by continued surveillance of merchant ships entering and leaving Cuban ports.

On Wednesday, November 7, the United States accepted the Soviet offer to inspect outbound missile-bearing ships, and Secretary McNamara notified the Joint Chiefs of Staff of procedures for conducting the at-sea inspection.

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The Soviets provided the names of the nine vessels which were carrying out the missiles; but these ships did not comply with the agreement to sail a single transit route, and there was difficulty in finding all of them. Admiral Anderson passed the order to Admiral Dennison: "Don't wait -- go find them."

By Sunday, November 11, all ships reported by the Soviets as having missiles aboard had been inspected. A total of 42 missiles were visually sighted and photographed.

The decision was reached to lift the quarantine and terminate the October 23 Proclamation if the USSR agreed to remove the IL-28 bombers remaining in Cuba. Aerial reconnaissance and surveillance, however, were to continue.

During the final week of the naval quarantine, all major decisions and actions were being taken at the diplomatic level, but quarantine forces continued to intercept, trail, and photograph ships of special interest approaching Cuba. Soviet submarine activity was nil.

On the 19th of November, Castro announced that if the Soviet Union wished to remove the aircraft he would not obstruct such a move. This was followed by the USSR's agreement to return the planes to Russia and effect the withdrawal within 30 days.

On the 20th, President Kennedy announced the accord, and stated that it enabled the United States to withdraw the quarantine imposed on October 24.

During the period October 24 to November 20, naval aircraft had flown 30,000 flight hours in 9,000 sorties, for a total distance of six million miles. Sixty-eight aircraft squadrons, composed of 19,000 personnel, and eight aircraft carriers, whose combined crews totaled 25,000 personnel, had participated in the action.

Ninety ships which were directly involved in the quarantine had steamed for a total of 780,000 miles, and each of the carriers had covered a 10,000-mile track.

A total of 183 ships had taken an active part in all operations during the quarantine. The carriers INDEPENDENCE and ENTERPRISE had remained at sea for 36 and 32 consecutive days, respectively. ASW forces

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had averaged 23 days at sea and processed submarine contacts for a total of 2,889 hours. An amphibious task force prepared for assault operations was afloat in the Caribbean throughout this period. It included the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force of about 40,000 marines from the Marine division/wing team on the East Coast and the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade from the West Coast.

The whole quarantine operation was conducted by the Navy with great efficiency and precision. The salient point in this aspect of the operation, aside from the commendable manner in which the U.S. Navy carried through its responsibilities, was the great circumspection with which the Soviets acted, despite an initial display of bravado in their public comments.

Contingency Planning and Preparatory Actions

The following describes our contingency planning, and operations to back up this planning, particularly those operations which we were in readiness to perform had the circumstances of the developing situation required their implementation. The Department of Defense maintains plans to deal with a wide range of military contingencies that may arise anywhere in the world. Over the past year and a half, we have given particular attention to the development of a family of broad and flexible plans to cope with virtually any contingency that might arise in connection with Cuba. Admiral Dennison, CINCLANT, was designated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the commander of the unified command having primary planning responsibility for Cuban contingencies, and as the responsible officer to execute such plans, should it become necessary.

These plans were under constant review by all appropriate headquarters, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have been and still are being continually revised in the light of fresh intelligence. In early October, these plans were ready for execution.

At the October 1 meeting mentioned above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary McNamara discussed our contingency plans in the light of the latest intelligence. The Secretary then sent the memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff requesting contingency preparatory actions and an evaluation of the consequences of such actions. The political objectives of the contingencies were defined as the removal of the threat of Soviet offensive weapon systems, and, if necessary, the removal of the Castro regime to assure the permanent removal of these weapons.

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All preparations prior to imposition of the naval quarantine and the decision to implement this action were directed in contemplation of possible execution of the contingency plans.

When intelligence was received that a significant Soviet threat to the United States was possibly evolving, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed Admiral Dennison to take certain preparatory actions as a matter of prudence.

On October 6, Admiral Dennison directed the development of the highest state of readiness to execute any or all of his contingency plans for Cuba. These instructions were addressed to the commanders who were designated in the contingency plans as the officers responsible for the detailed execution of those plans.

During the following ten days, preparatory actions were taken that did much to insure that we were in a balanced posture when the crisis came to a head. These measures included prepositioning of bulk supplies (POL and ammunition) at Florida bases, completion of plans to reinforce Guantanamo, the reinforcement of our air defense capabilities in the southeastern United States, and advanced preparation for the transfer of the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, with its associated amphibious shipping, from the West Coast to the Caribbean area.

When conclusive photographic evidence was produced that revealed the presence of Soviet offensive weapons in Cuba, events began to move swiftly. Reconnaissance was intensified; Atlantic Fleet units, if not already deployed, prepared for sea; General Gerhart was directed to augment even further the air defense of the southeastern United States, and Admiral Dennison directed shore-based Navy and Marine fighter squadrons to assist Continental Air Defense Command forces. Commanders in chief in other areas of the world were informed of the situation.

On October 16, General Powell, Commanding General, U.S. Continental Army Command, was directed to assume the responsibility for planning Army participation in possible action against Cuba, relieving General Howze, Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps. General Howze would have commanded the Joint Task Force, should it have been necessary to take the missile bases out of Cuba by ground action. Since the Army mission involved not only seizure of missile bases by ground attack, but defense and protection of the vital southeastern United States

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ports, airfields, and staging bases, as well as of the civilian population of Florida and adjacent areas, plans for these actions were also completed. Additionally, the Army was prepared for the employment of Special Forces in Cuba. In the early days, a Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force was established under the command of Major General Yarborough, and two operating bases were created.

The Army's XVIII Airborne Corps, consisting of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions and support units, totaling about 35,000 men, was in a high state of readiness throughout the build-up and was prepared to move on order.

On October 18, a reinforced Marine infantry battalion from the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade and a Marine light antiaircraft missile battalion (HAWK) from the West Coast were ordered airlifted to Guantanamo.

On October 19, Admiral Dennison completed his command arrangements for the execution of contingency plans, and established his Cuban contingencies communications. Late that evening, the President decided that Admiral Dennison, acting for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, should prepare a plan for the limited blockade of Cuba. In fact, as already indicated, such plans already existed, although not designed specifically for the situation at hand. These plans, however, provided a firm base line and contributed substantially to the prompt preparation of detailed cohesive plans to meet the requirement.

On October 19, the Strategic Air Command was in maintaining approximately of its force on minute ground alert, with B-52s conducting normal airborne alert indoctrination training sorties. SAC alert forces on October 14 included strike aircraft and tanker aircraft, for a total of aircraft; and ballistic missiles. Within the following week, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed General Power to take the following actions:

a. Evacuate SAC bombers and tankers from Florida to make room for positioning of tactical fighters and defense forces.

b. Place of the B-52 force on airborne alert. This action was initiated on October 23.

- c. Disperse the B-47 fleet to predetermined military bases and civil airports.
- d. Bring the full SAC force to an advanced combat readiness posture.
- e. Assist Admiral Dennison in surveillance of shipping operations.

In every case, these actions were completed without incident. Relocation of aircraft out of Florida was completed within three days, with no interim degradation of alert posture. Airborne alert involving B-52s was achieved hours after implementation, which was less than the planned time. Approximately hours after directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, fully combat-configured B-47s were dispersed to locations, with no degradation of alert posture. Within hours after Joint Chiefs of Staff direction, of the total SAC force was in a fully combat ready posture -- a total of bombers and tankers. Assistance requested for the surveillance of shipping by Admiral Dennison was initiated hours after the request was received. To accomplish this, General Power immediately directed elements of the B-52 airborne alert force, in conjunction with their primary mission, to report all ship movements in the Atlantic south of 45 degrees north. On October 25, General Power added KC-97s and RB-47s to assist Admiral Dennison in naval surveillance.

Subsequent to relocation of SAC bombers out of Florida, the task of moving in the Air Force tactical strike force was begun. Prior to this time, there were 140 tactical fighters located in Florida. Within 48 hours, this force was increased to 511 fighters, 72 reconnaissance aircraft, and 40 tankers. This force immediately assumed a one-hour alert status, with a capability for going to a 15-minute alert. To provide an indication of the magnitude of this task, this force represented approximately one-third of the Air Force's world-wide tactical fighter resources.

As early as April 1961, we recognized the need to increase Air Force radar surveillance and defense capability in the area to the south and east of Florida. Subsequent actions provided a squadron each of airborne early warning aircraft and air defense fighters operating from Florida bases. A total of 26 aircraft were committed. In addition, there were 240 aircraft on normal air defense alert throughout the U.S. Within 48 hours after notification, General Gerhart had increased the force in

Florida to 62 aircraft; the total number on air defense alert throughout the U.S. increased to 520, of which 173 were dispersed to auxiliary bases. During the President's speech on October 22, there were 22 interceptor aircraft airborne in the event of some rash action from Cuba.

With the missile warning radar all oriented toward the northern approaches where the threat had been, it was necessary to improvise to get some coverage to the south. The satellite tracking stations at Moorestown, New Jersey; Thomasville, Georgia; and Laredo, Texas, were diverted to the job of watching Cuba, although the Moorestown site had to return periodically to its primary task of tracking satellites, so that nothing would be missed there.

Meanwhile, other essential preparatory measures continued. Amphibious shipping was in the process of being assembled on both coasts; Army and Air Force units participating in Exercise THREE PAIRS in Texas were withdrawn and returned to home stations; the Base Commander at Guantanamo was instructed to be prepared to evacuate noncombatants any time from the evening of October 20 onward. Again, overseas commanders were apprised of developments, and cautioned that U.S. action might generate Soviet responses in a variety of ways and places. The partial mobilization of certain reserve forces was reviewed, with particular emphasis on 21 squadrons of C-119 aircraft and 3 squadrons of C-123 aircraft, all of which were essential to the execution of possible airborne assault operations.

As mentioned earlier, Guantanamo was reinforced and the non-combatants evacuated on October 22. We now had over 5,000 combat-ready Marines at Guantanamo in a well-balanced force, rapidly positioned by air and sea lift from both coasts. Also, on this date, the first of three Army air defense battalions began movement to Florida, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered an increased readiness condition for forces assigned to the Cuban contingency operations.

Following the President's Proclamation on the 22nd, deployment to apply the quarantine was quickly completed, and preparations for any eventuality in Cuba continued. The 2nd Marine Division/Wing Team had several of its assault landing teams already afloat, and the remainder loading aboard amphibious shipping in the Norfolk-Morehead City area; elements of the 1st Armored Division were en route from Fort Hood, Texas, to Fort Stewart, Georgia, so they would be more accessible to port facilities; the Army's airborne divisions were prepared to move

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on order, and other units were ready to move to air or sea ports of embarkation; and on the West Coast, the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade was loading in amphibious shipping. Stocks of weapons, ammunition and other vital back-up supplies were set up in Florida under a logistics command, established on October 24. Advance command posts were also established.

From this date onward, military preparations proceeded with remarkable smoothness. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were in twice-daily session -- very nearly continuously at times. When the quarantine became effective on October 24, our intelligence reported that Soviet forces were not releasing individuals whose normal term of service had been completed; and within the Soviet and European satellite forces, an advanced state of alert was established. We could find no conclusive evidence, however, that the USSR was preparing to initiate general war.

As the exchange between the President and Chairman Khrushchev continued, reconnaissance of the missile sites in Cuba at first reflected evidence of a crash program to reach operational readiness at the earliest possible date. In consequence, our deployments continued. Our plans were brought under the most critical scrutiny, and the adequacy of the proposed operations reassessed in the light of our increasingly rich store of intelligence.

The 5th Infantry Division (MECZ) at Fort Carson, Colorado, and a combat command (roughly 1/3rd of an armored division) of the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas, were earmarked as follow-on forces for Admiral Dennison, should additional Army forces be needed. This measure was again a matter of prudence, and the probability was low that these forces would be needed. The Army forces which were alerted, brought up to strength in personnel and equipment, moved, and prepared to execute the Cuban operation, were a part of the largest U.S. invasion force prepared since World War II. The remainder of Army units in the U.S. were prepared to carry out any other assigned missions, such as the reinforcement of Europe.

On October 27, an ASW barrier was established southeast of Newfoundland, and submarines were ordered to stations. Also, the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade completed loading, and sailed from West Coast ports.

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On Sunday, October 28, Khrushchev announced that he had ordered missile sites in Cuba dismantled. We, nevertheless, continued our build-up. As of October 30, over 100,000 Army troops were poised ready to invade Cuba. These consisted of: airborne assault echelon, 34,800 in staging areas at home stations; surface echelon, 5,300 in staging area at Fort Stewart, and 32,000 in staging areas at home stations; floating reserve, 7,300 en route to Fort Stewart, and 3,300 in staging areas at home stations; on call force, 4,000 scheduled to arrive at Fort Stewart on November 3, and 15,000 in staging areas at home stations. Follow-on forces, alerted for the operation later and comprising some 25,000 men, are not included in the total figures above.

Based on existing plans, the Army's preparations in the civil affairs-military government field were extensive, especially for the provision of civil relief items needed to reduce civilian suffering to a minimum. Those items included food, medicine, and equipment, all of which were expected to be in short supply.

Plans for lesser air attacks against the surface-to-air missile sites in Cuba were promulgated, and an entire spectrum of plans for air action only within the context of our basic air strikes plan was established.

From this date onward, tensions eased slightly. On November 1, reconnaissance revealed that IRBM and MRBM sites were apparently being dismantled. Subsequent reconnaissance demonstrated that offensive weapons were being removed from Cuban soil.

By November 15, our posture for extended operations against Cuba was at its peak. The 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force was present in the Caribbean; elements of five STRAC divisions with supporting forces were prepared to participate in operations in Cuba; three air defense battalions were deployed in Florida; a base command was organized in Florida to provide necessary logistic support; plans and preparations were finalized to conduct civil affairs activities in Cuba; the remainder of the STRAC force and essentially all other Army units in the United States were supporting the above forces or were prepared for possible deployment to other areas; personnel and equipment were redistributed where necessary; plans for call-up of reserve units were reexamined to insure proper scheduling; troop carrier aircraft were assembled and ready for deployment; and naval forces at sea were operating at the highest state of readiness. Matters were sufficiently in hand that the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved Admiral Dennison's request to begin joint training and

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rehearsal exercises on November 19. The President was advised on November 16 that all essential preliminary steps for further military action were completed. It was also pointed out that this advanced state of readiness could be maintained for approximately thirty days. When the President officially lifted the quarantine on November 21, measures were taken promptly to return to our normal readiness posture.

By November 29, relaxation in readiness was well under way. The Air Force Reserve units were released and other units commenced moves to their home stations. The process was orderly and carefully planned, however, so that the capability to execute our plans within a few days was retained. Thus, by December 1, our forces were returning rapidly to their pre-Cuban crisis posture; however, Army and Air Force Air Defense units remain deployed to protect the southeastern United States.

Logistics

One of the first logistics tasks was to assure that the resources of the Military Sea Transportation Service and the Military Air Transport Service were coordinated effectively. Passenger requirements of the military departments that had been programmed to move by MSTS were diverted to air transportation, since the troopships had to be held in readiness at Atlantic coast ports. The Joint Staff made allocations of both MSTS and MATS resources based on relative priorities.

All MSTS workload and shipping commitments after October 22 were directed to the Cuban situation. Seven dry cargo ships, 6 tankers, and 9 passenger ships were actually engaged or specifically assigned for the operation.

All available U.S. Flag clean tankers were spot-chartered, but sufficient clean tankers were not available to meet all desired delivery dates. All critical requirements, however, were met.

It was not necessary to employ requisitioning procedures. Tankers and dry cargo ships were acquired under "voluntary" charters. If the contingency plan had become fully operational, requisitioning would probably have been employed.

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Through close working arrangements between MATS and the commercial air industry, commercial air carriers were alerted in advance of anticipated increased world-wide requirements for October and November 1962. As MATS aircraft and crews were diverted to meet the Cuban crisis, requests were placed with commercial air carriers to move cargo and passengers on normal MATS routes. These increased requirements accentuated the use of commercial services.

With the first indications of the heightening of the Cuban crisis, operational rates for aircraft were accelerated, waiving normal aircrew flying hour limits, raising allowable aircraft gross weights to wartime factors, and increasing personnel duty hours. For example, MATS aircraft flew 175 hours per month, and the support people were on 12-hour-a-day shifts, 7 days a week. Both MATS and the Air Force Tactical Air Command Troop Carrier Wings participated in the airlift operations. These transports actually went into high gear to support our contingency plans on October 10. By midnight of October 19, all essential items for the first week of operation were in place in Florida. Much of the remaining back-up stock was either in place or en route to the two depots selected for support.

To indicate the size of this task, airlift of approximately 7,000 bombs, 40,000 rockets, 3 million rounds of ammunition, and 3,000 fuel tanks, pylons, and launchers was completed. A total of 4,600 troops and 7,000 tons of material and supplies were airlifted. Some of this material came from as far away as Turkey and the Philippines. MATS, Active and Reserve Air Force Transport Units flew 1,460 special air missions. All of this was in addition to the organic moves of the units involved in the operation. This was accomplished in about two weeks, and is a splendid example of the flexibility and responsiveness of our airlift capability to react in an emergency situation.

A condensed summary of the major airlift movements directly connected with Cuba is:

- a. 5th Marine Battalion from Camp Pendleton, California, to Guantanamo (2,200 troops, 1,700 tons)
- b. Logistic support for the Marine Battalion from Turner Air Force Base, Georgia, and Charleston Air Force Base, South Carolina, to Guantanamo (400 tons)

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- c. Air Force Tactical Air Command Units from various U.S. locations to Florida (515 tons)
- d. Marine HAWK Battalion from George Air Force Base, California, to Cherry Point, North Carolina (544 troops, 1,265 tons)
- e. Marine Air Group from Beaufort, South Carolina, to Key West, Florida (345 tons)
- f. Army Signal Units from Fort Hood, Texas, to Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, and Bush Air Force Base, Georgia (164 troops, 284 tons)
- g. Strike Command forces from Fort Hood, Texas, to home bases (390 troops, 550 tons)
- h. Army armored vehicles from Biggs Air Force Base, Texas, to Homestead Air Force Base, Florida (164 troops, 280 tons)

Formation drop training of personnel and equipment was stepped up to meet possible troop drop requirements. Both night and day formation training was carried out. Between October 24 and November 2, MATS airdropped in formation 42 tons of cargo and 1,660 personnel in meeting the Army's joint airborne training requirement, as well as gaining the valuable by-product of polishing MATS proficiency. Over the period between September 11 and November 30, more than 10,000 troops were airdropped in formation training.

The Defense Traffic Management Service experienced an increase of about 25% in actions taken to develop capabilities to meet cargo requirements. Approximately 41% of passenger movements during this period were in support of the Cuban situation. Despite these sizable increases in workload and the short deadlines involved, all requirements for transportation and traffic management support were met.

Similarly, good advance planning made it a relatively simple matter to handle the Air Alert with its heavy petroleum demands.

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The only action necessary was to order into execution certain planned tanker movements and make additional contracts for jet fuel to replace the stocks which were being drawn down. A few additional contracts for inland supply of the Army were necessary, but the Defense Petroleum Supply Center was able to handle them without difficulty.

Inasmuch as the crisis area was close to an unlimited supply of Navy Special Fuel Oil, the Navy supply also was easily provided.

With regard to other supply requirements, Defense Supply Agency was able to fill approximately 90% of the 93,577 priority requisitions it received between October 12 and November 27.

Priorities and allocations assistance was rendered in five cases, including radio equipment items for STRAC units at Fort Bragg, and rod assemblies for liquid oxygen and nitrogen trailers for Engineer troops at the same location.

Communications functioned well, although we remain much interested in improvements here. In addition to taking care of the Defense Department problems through the employment of the Defense Communications Agency, Defense assisted other government departments on a world-wide basis. For example, secure record communications were provided for specified members of the National Security Council; an inter-American telephone network and a Washington-Paris voice circuit were established; cryptographic equipment was transferred to CIA and State Department, and military facilities were temporarily employed to permit a 24-hour response; and the United States Information Agency was loaned a transmitter for broadcasts covering Cuba.

A number of real property actions were required. These included a number of legal or administrative steps to expedite procurement: arrangements with Department of the Interior to take over immediate control and use of the Island of Dry Tortugas as the site for a 50 KW radio transmitter required for special purposes; with GSA for the Voice of America to use 20 acres of the former Navy landing field, Richmond, Florida, for the immediate installation of a VOA radio transmitter site; with Dade County Port Authority for the Air Force to begin immediate use of the former Navy Airfield at Opa Locka, Florida.

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Civil Defense

Turning now to civil defense, two plans were formulated to increase near-term preparations in the event of possible military engagement with Cuba. The first plan outlined steps to be taken in the vicinity of possible targets relatively close to Cuba which might come under sporadic attack with conventional weapons. The second plan outlined steps to be taken in response to the possibility of attacks within range of MRBMs from Cuba.

In compliance with Presidential directives, certain preparatory steps were taken to effect Plan #1 without involvement of the public, primarily in Florida. The second plan, for regional fallout alerting, was largely overtaken by a decision to accelerate nation-wide, longer term civil defense efforts.

At a meeting with the Governor's Conference Committee on Civil Defense and Post-Attack Recovery Planning on October 27, an accelerated civil defense program was presented by Stuart Pittman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Civil Defense, and approved by that committee, and later by the three associations of mayors and county officials.

Reserve Forces

As for the Reserves, it became quite evident during the early stages of the Cuban crisis that it might be necessary to recall some Ready Reserve units in order to support certain contingency plans, if and when it became necessary to implement these plans. On October 22, the Secretary ordered immediate preparations for the recall of those Ready Reserve units needed to support proposed actions at that time.

In addition to the authority to recall reservists to active duty, Executive Order 11058 provided the authority to extend enlistments and appointments of those personnel already on active duty. Hence, on the evening of October 23, Secretary McNamara instructed Secretary Korth to take appropriate steps to this end in order to provide the Navy with the forces necessary to support the quarantine, and to insure the Marines sufficient forces to meet whatever requirements might be placed upon them, particularly with reference to the reinforcement of Guantanamo.

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The net effect of this directive was the extension of 6,322 Navy and 1,831 Marine Corps officer and enlisted personnel, all of whom we were able to release in time for them to be home by Christmas.

On the night of October 27, under the authority granted by Executive Order 11058, Secretary McNamara instructed Secretary Zuckert to order to active duty from the Air Force Ready Reserve, units and members of 24 troop carrier/assault squadrons and associated elements totaling 14,200 personnel. These units reported to active duty the following day, and by mid-afternoon units were reporting 95% to 100% of authorized strength on board. In less than 30 hours, they were ready to perform their assigned missions. This recall action immediately made available 392 C-119 and 47 C-123 aircraft. The quick response of these units had a very important effect on the final outcome of the crisis. The high manning levels and state of training of these units made it unnecessary to call filler personnel. The outstanding performance and high state of operational readiness of these units typify what we are seeking to achieve in Ready Reserve units.

On November 21, Secretary McNamara authorized the Secretary of the Air Force to release the recalled Air Force reservists from active duty. The Department is deeply pleased and satisfied with their responsiveness. No other Ready Reserve units were alerted or ordered to active duty during this period; however, the Services took detailed preparatory actions for possible recall of Reserve Component units. As an example, Army took action to preselect assignments for individual reservists in order to insure that those Reserve Component units earmarked for possible call to active duty would be at full strength. These individuals were selected on the basis of recalling first those with the least amount of active service.

Not to be omitted is a word about the superlative response of the civil service and military service dependents who, without complaint and in a spirit of complete cooperativeness, lent their support to their rapid, efficient evacuation from Guantanamo. Upon Secretary Korth's recommendation, Secretary McNamara authorized from his contingency funds, a separate maintenance allowance for the service dependents as a small

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measure of compensation to them. We were able to arrange their prompt return to Guantanamo in time to permit reunion of their families for Christmas.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

From the Cuban crisis, much valuable experience has been gained and lessons learned. While the full value of these experiences has not yet been assessed, it is already clear that the military establishment responded to a threat to our national security promptly, with imagination, vigor, and an exemplary degree of professional competence and skill.

The three most salient points about this affair were:

1. The Russians made a strategically significant move. In other words, it was the sort of thing the United States must have the power either to deter or to defeat. In this case, we failed to deter it; we did defeat it. Sooner or later, we must assume the Soviets, or perhaps the Chinese, will make another such move. We must be capable of defeating it again.
2. Both nuclear and non-nuclear forces played essential roles in our response. The umbrella, or shield, was our nuclear power; the sword was our conventional power. Undoubtedly the most important factor which kept this crisis from growing, which kept the Soviets from making a counter-move elsewhere in the world, was the danger that any U.S. -USSR confrontation carries within it the seeds of a possible nuclear exchange. But what enabled us to produce this confrontation was our non-nuclear power, which we were not only able to apply but to make clear what we would apply in an ascending escalation of violence to a point where the Soviets would clearly find it excessively dangerous to pursue the game. Our unmistakable conventional superiority in the Caribbean, and our unmistakable intent to use it, placed on the Soviet leadership the clear choice of either backing down on their aggressive move, or expanding the crisis beyond the Caribbean theatre, with the consequent danger that it would eventually lead to the destruction of the Soviet homeland.
3. The crisis once again illustrated the inseparability of the various strands of national policy: our political decisions had military implications; our military decisions had political implications.

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Indeed, both elements were inextricably intertwined in the very essence of the situation. Was the crisis, basically, a military challenge or a political challenge? Obviously, it was a national security challenge, encompassing both, and consequently requiring that control be held firmly in the hands of the man preeminently responsible for national security; that is, in the hands of the President.

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